



Prevalence of multisite musculoskeletal symptoms: a French cross-sectional working population-based study

Submitted by Emmanuel Lemoine on Wed, 11/12/2014 - 16:27

Titre	Prevalence of multisite musculoskeletal symptoms: a French cross-sectional working population-based study
Type de publication	Article de revue
Auteur	Parot-Schinkel, Elsa [1], Descatha, Alexis [2], Ha, Catherine [3], Petit, Audrey [4], Leclerc, Annette [5], Roquelaure, Yves [6]
Type	Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture
Année	2012
Langue	Anglais
Date	2012
Numéro	1
Volume	13
Titre de la revue	BMC musculoskeletal disorders
ISSN	1471-2474
Mots-clés	Adult [7], Chi-Square Distribution [8], Cross-Sectional Studies [9], Female [10], France [11], Health Surveys [12], Humans [13], Male [14], Middle Aged [15], musculoskeletal diseases [16], occupational diseases [17], Occupational Health [18], Prevalence [19], Questionnaires [20], Severity of Illness Index [21], Time Factors [22], Young Adult [23]

Résumé en anglais	<p>BACKGROUND: The musculoskeletal disorders in working population represent one of the most worrying work-related health issues at the present time and although the very great majority of available data on the subject focus on musculoskeletal disorders defined by anatomical site, a growing number of studies indicate the low prevalence of disorders strictly confined to a specific anatomical site. The objective of this study was to describe the prevalence and characteristics of multisite musculoskeletal symptoms (multisite MS) in a large French working population. METHODS: This study was performed on surveillance data of the cross-sectional survey (2002-2005) conducted by a network of occupational physicians in the working population of the Loire Valley region (from 20 to 59 years old). Data concerning MS were collected in the waiting room of the occupational physicians by means of the self-administrated standardized NORDIC questionnaire. RESULTS: The study population comprised 3,710 workers (2,162 men (58%) and 1,548 women (42%)) with a mean age of 38.4 years (standard deviation: 10.4 years). The prevalence of MS during the past 12 months was 83.8% with 95% confidence interval of [82.8-85.3] for men and 83.9% [82.0-85.7] for women. The prevalence of subacute MS (lasting at least 30 days) over the past 12 months was 32.8% [30.9-34.8] for men and 37.3% [34.9-39.7] for women. Two-thirds of workers reported MS in more than one anatomical site and about 20% reported MS lasting at least 30 days in more than one anatomical site. The anatomical sites most frequently associated with other MS were the upper back, hip, elbow and neck. The majority of these multisite MS were widespread, involving at least two of the three anatomical regions (upper limb, axial region and lower limb). CONCLUSIONS: The frequency and extent of multisite MS reported by workers are considerable. Further research must be conducted in this field in order to provide a better understanding of the characteristics and determinants of these multisite MS.</p>
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DOI	10.1186/1471-2474-13-122 [25]
Lien vers le document	http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2474-13-122 [25]

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